

Message Text

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64

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 352

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE MOSCOW 2798

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, UR, US, CSCE

SUBJ: EMBASSY TRAVEL

1. SUMMARY. RECENT PPO TRIP TO SIBERIA WAS MODIFIED TO THE GREAT PHYSICAL DISCOMFORT OF EMBOFF AND WIFE WHEN TRAVEL ROUTE THAT HAD BEEN APPROVED BY THE COMPETENT MOSCOW AUTHORITIES WAS ALTERED BY THE COMPETENT YAKUTSK AUTHORITIES. END RESULT WAS TO PROLONG AN EIGHT HOUR FLIGHT TO TWENTY HOURS AND COST THE EMBASSY AN ADDITIONAL R152. END SUMMARY.

2. MID-FEBRUARY PPO TRIP TO IRKUTSK, YAKUTSK, AND Khabarovsk WAS SIGNIFICANTLY ALTERED AND TRAVELERS GREATLY INCONVENIENCED WHEN LOCAL OFFICIALS IN YAKUTSK RECINDED APPROVAL AND CANCELLED RESERVATIONS OBTAINED IN MOSCOW FOR AIR TRAVEL MOSCOW-IRKUTSK (VIA OMSK)-YAKUTSK-Khabarovsk (VIA CHUL'MAN, MAGDAGACHI AND BLAGOVESHCHENSK)-MOSCOW. EMBOFF CHECKED IN WITH AEROFLOT UPON ARRIVAL IN YAKUTSK AND HAD RELEVANT FLIGHT DATA ENTERED ON TICKETS FOR ONWARD TRAVEL TO Khabarovsk. HOWEVER, ATTENDANT RETURNED FOLLOWING DAY WITH SENIOR SUPERVISOR TO IN-FORM EMBASSY TRAVELERS THAT THERE HAD BEEN A "MISTAKE" AND THAT THERE WAS NO FLIGHT AFTERALL AND THAT IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO RETURN TO IRKUTSK FOR THE NECESSARY CONNECTION TO Khabarovsk. ON RETURN TO IRKUTSK, INTOURIST "HOSTESSES" WERE TAKEN ABACK AT OUT TRAVELERS' RETURN AND QUERIED WHY THEY HAD NOT TAKEN "MUCH MORE CONVENIENT" FLIGHT

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FROM YAKUTSK TO Khabarovsk. WHEN INFORMED THAT AEROFLOT

IN YAKUTSK HAD INSISTED THERE WAS NO FLIGHT THEY DEMURRED THAT THEY WERE CERTAIN FLIGHT HAD FLOWN AND THAT EMBOFF AND WIFE HAD CONFIRMED RESERVATIONS ON IT.

3. COMMENT: AEROFLOT FLIGHT 3981 FROM YAKUTSK TO Khabarovsk MAKES INTERMEDIATE STOPS IN CHUL'MAN, MAGDAGACHI AND BLAGOVESHCHENKS; THE LATTER TWO CITIES BEING SITUATED IN AMURSKAYA OBLAST' WHICH WAS CLOSED "TEMPORARILY" IN 1974. HOWEVER, EMBASSY TRAVELERS REGULARLY TRANSIT CLOSED-CITIES ENROUTE TO FINAL DESTINATIONS (E.G. MOSCOW TO IRKUTSK VIA OMSK) WHILE BEING CONFINED TO "INTERNATIONAL WAITING ROOMS" FOR THE DURATION OF THE STOP-OVER. GRANTED THAT BOTH CITIES ARE LOCATED CLOSE TO SINO-SOVIET FRONTIER AND HENCE OF GREAT SENSITIVITY TO SOVIETS, NONETHELESS TRAVEL ROUTE HAD BEEN CLEARED WITH THE "COMPETENT AUTHORITIES" (MFA, UPDK, AEROFLOT AND "OTHERS") IN MOSCOW PRIOR TO DEPARTURE AND LAST MINUTE REVISION CAUSED GREAT DISCOMFORT TO ASSISTANT PPO AND WIFE AND COST THE EMBASSY AN ADDITIONAL 152 RUBLES IN AIR FARE. END COMMENT.

4. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS APPROPRIATE WASHINGTON RETALIATION.
STOESSEL

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